

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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12

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 IO-14 DRC-01 /110 W
----- 033272

R 242100Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4229

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 2051

EO 11652 N/A

TAGS: PINS, PINT, NU

SUBJ: FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS ON REPORTED NATIONAL GUARD ABUSE OF
CAMPESEINOS

REF: MANAGUA 2020

1. ON MAY 22 OPPOSITION LA PRENSA CARRIED THE TEXT OF AN
ENERGETIC PROTEST BY THE BISHOP OF MATAGALPA, JULIAN BARNI,
AGAINST NATIONAL GUARD (GN) MISTREATMENT OF HIS CAMPESINO
PARISHIONERS. ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, BISHOP BARNI
DISPATCHED TWO PRIESTS TO THE AREA OF MATAGALPA WHERE REPORTS
OF MASSIVE DETENTIONS OF CAMPESINOS HAVE BEEN RAMPANT IN
RECENT DAYS. CONVINCED OF THE TRUTH OF SOME OF THESE REPORTS
AND THAT MANY OF THE DETENTIONS ARE UNJUSTIFIED, THE BISHOP IN
HIS COMMUNIQUE CALLS FOR "CORRECTION OF THE ABUSES FOR THE GOOD
NAME OF THE NATIONAL GUARD." BARNI ALSO STATES IN THE INTERVIEW
THAT HE HAD WRITTEN CERTIFIED LETTERS TO NATIONAL GUARD INSPECTOR
JOSE R. SOMOZA, AND SECURITY CHIEF GENERAL SAMUEL GENIE CALLING
THE MATAGALPA INCIDENTS TO THEIR ATTENTION AND REQUESTING ACTION TO
HALT THEM. BARNI CLAIMED THAT THE LAST LETTER WAS SENT MAY 11 AND
HE HAD RECEIVED NO RESPONSE TO EITHER.

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2. THE NATIONAL GUARD ON MAY 22 ISSUED A STATEMENT ACKNOWLEDGING RECEIPT OF AMADA PINEDA DE ARAUZ' CHARGES MAY 17 (SEE REFTEL). BOCCORDING TO THE STATEMENT, THE NEXT DAY TWO OFFICERS WERE DISPATCHED TO THE SUPPOSED AREA OF THE INCIDENT TO INVESTIGATE. IT GOES ON TO SAY THAT THE GN IS AWAITING THE RESULTS OF THIS INVESTIGATION BEFORE TAKING ACTION AND IT INTENDS TO PROVIDE COMPLETE INFORMATION ON THE MATTER TO THE PUBLIC. THE STATEMENT GIVES ASSURANCE THAT THE FULL WEIGHT OF THE LAW WILL BE BROUGHT TO BEAR ON ANY FOUND GUILTY OF THE CRIMES CHARGED BY MRS. ARAUZ.

3. COMMENT: THE GN STATEMENT INDICATES THAT THE AUTHORITIES ARE TAKING THE MATTER SERIOUSLY, AND ARE DISPOSED TO DEAL HARSHLY WITH ANY GUILTY GN SOLDIERS. THIS SEEMS THE MOST GRACEFUL AND ASTUTE WAY OUT OF THE WHOLE EMBARRASSING INCIDENT FOR THE GUARD. UNFORTUNATELY, THIS FORTHCOMING PUBLIC RESPONSE WAS MADE NEARLY A WEEK AFTER MRS. ARAUZ FILED HER CHARGES INSTEAD OF IMMEDIATELY AFTER LA PRENSA PUBLISHED HER STORY (MAY 17). SINCE THE GN, ACCORDING TO ITS COMMUNIQUE, DISPATCHED THE INVESTIGATORY TEAM ON THE 18TH, A TIMELY PUBLIC RESPONSE TO THE CHARGES WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE. IN THE BROADER SCHEME OF THINGS, THE ARAUZ CASE WILL PROBABLY RESULT IN A TIGHTENING UP OF GN PROCEDURES IN FIELD OPERATIONS OF THIS TYPE. MORE ATTENTION CAN BE EXPECTED TO BE PAID TO AVOIDING INCIDENTS SUCH AS THOSE CONDEMNED BY BISHOP BARNI SINCE THEY ANTAGONIZE THE PEASANTRY AND VIOLATE BASIC RURAL COUNTER-SUBERSION TACTICS.
WARNER

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